Program: **Sudden Oak Death** Date: March 26, 2004

A destructive fungus that causes a disease called sudden oak death (SOD) was confirmed in a large wholesale nursery in Los Angeles County, California on March 8, 2004. The nursery was sampled as part of the USDA Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) national SOD survey. California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) plant pathology laboratory confirmed *Phytophthera ramorum* on six varieties of *Camellia*.

P. ramorum was also confirmed at a nursery in San Diego County, California. This facility ships Camellia bonsai directly to mail order customers.

Previously, *P. ramorum* had only been detected in 12 northern California counties and a portion of Curry County, Oregon.

PPQ is working with CDFA to determine the scope of the problem in California. Plants shipped from the Los Angeles county nursery have been traced to nurseries in 39 states. State and Federal agricultural inspectors are visiting these nurseries and placing State stop sale and Federal hold notices on *P. ramorum* host plants from the wholesale nursery. To date over 1,100 facilities had received these plants and 762 have been contacted. Samples are being collected from the held plants and tested for the pathogen; none have tested positive.

USDA has the shipping list from the mail order facility and will be contacting their customers by mail with more information about these plants.

During the SOD survey in California, suspect samples were also found at 11 other Southern California nurseries. PPQ issued a Federal Emergency Action Notice to these 11 nurseries to hold *P. ramorum* host plants until testing was completed. Samples from seven of these facilities have tested negative for *P. ramorum*. Testing continues on samples from the four remaining facilities.

The APHIS Emergency Operations Center was activated on Tuesday March 16 to manage this emergency. A public SOD Hot Line number was established at APHIS. The number is 1-888-703-4457 and a SOD page is available at the Hot Issues section of the APHIS web site, www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/sod/sod.html.

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